



## **COSTLY INTERNATIONAL CALLS MAY BE SPYWARE SCAM**

Some consumers have complained to us that they have received bills for long-distance phone calls for which they do not believe they are responsible. The calls were supposedly placed on their computers and involved visits to pornographic websites based in foreign countries, most notably Great Britain. The bills are as much as \$200 or more. You should be aware that you are responsible for any use of your computer by a person with access in your household. This means you should be careful about unsupervised use of computers by your children and their friends.

However, you should also be aware that if your computer is infected by certain kinds of spyware, it could be hijacked and used to dial up for-pay websites, including pornographic websites, without anyone in your household being aware of it.

If you receive an unexpected bill for international long distance telephone calls, you should of course inquire as to the destination of the calls. If they involve for-pay websites, you should very carefully review who has access to your computer and who may have been misusing it. My greatest concern would be that a child was accessing inappropriate and possibly dangerous websites.

If you are convinced that no one used your computer to access the sites in question, you may wish to consider filing a consumer complaint with our office at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/consumer.shtml#file>. You should also look for a good anti-spyware program to install on your computer – it's a good idea in any case.

Internet safety tips for parents, kids, and consumers are available on our website at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/internet/inbhome.shtml>. Information about spam is available at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/consumer/spam.shtml>. The Internet is a wonderful resource. Use it wisely. Sincerely,

Greg Abbott, Attorney General of Texas

**WRITE TO: Greg Abbott, Office of the Attorney General, PO Box 12548,  
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